



## **Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee**

### **Minutes**

Date: July 20th, 2022

Time: 7:15PM

Location: Via Zoom conference

Attendees:

*Executive committee:* Christopher Tonkin (chair), Jack Johnson, Muris Kobaslija, Doug Mayo-Wells (secretary), Scott Smith (TAC liaison)

*Town of Arlington:* Daniel Amstutz (Sr Transportation Planner)

*Members of the public:* Linda Epstein, Len Greenberg

Reference materials:

Update from Town Counsel on Open Meeting Law Requirements & Remote Participation

<https://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/61856/>

Department of Planning & Community Development presentation for 07-20-22 meeting:

<https://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/61902/>

Spy Pond and Parmenter School Playground proposed designs

<https://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/59602/>

## **1. Greetings and introductions, ground rules for online meetings**

Christopher Tonkin advised that the meeting is held remotely related to extension of COVID-19 measures adopted during the State of Emergency. Tonkin notified attendees that Committee secretary Doug Mayo-Wells is taking minutes; the meeting is being recorded for the purposes of verifying the minutes; and the recording will be deleted after the minutes are approved. Tonkin confirmed the committee members and others in attendance for the meeting.

## 2. Reappointment of Executive Board members, vacant position on board

Christopher Tonkin: Len Greenberg and Mark Halliday have expressed interest in being on the executive board. Linda Epstein has also been attending meetings regularly. There is currently one vacancy on the board.

Len Greenberg: Happy to be on board or serve as member-at-large.

Christopher Tonkin: Executive session is a challenge in remote meetings, have generally asked candidates to step out for discussion and vote.

Daniel Amstutz: Select Board goes into executive session, but most Town committees don't. Would need a way to invite candidates to return to the meeting after discussion and vote.

Scott Smith: Could do at the end of the meeting.

Christopher Tonkin: Let's defer till next month.

Muris Kobaslija: Should follow up with others who submitted letters of interest, even if they have not been attending meetings.

Doug Mayo-Wells: Try to ensure all committee members are present for discussion and vote, and publicize in advance so any interested parties are able to attend?

## 3. Approval of the outstanding minutes for previous meetings

None ready for review

## 4. Bluebikes update, invite to Town Day?

Bluebikes have been invited to attend Town Day (with ABAC funding the booth), but have not yet confirmed.

Daniel Amstutz: If ABAC and TAC (Transportation Advisory Committee) are sharing a booth, should the cost be split between the committees?

Christopher Tonkin: ABAC will fund the booth since ABAC has funds which need to be obligated.

Jack Johnson moves that ABAC allocate funds for a booth for Bluebikes at Town Day, because it promotes bicycling and equitable transportation in the town.

Scott Smith seconds

Motion carries, none opposed

Action item: Daniel Amstutz will transfer funds for both booths, and request Bluebikes' booth to be located near ABAC's.

## 5. Report from COBWEB Officer

Not present

## 6. TAC (Transportation Advisory Committee) report

Scott Smith was not able to attend the TAC meeting, but is recovering now.

Daniel Amstutz: Not much about bikes. TAC voted to support the SRTS (Safe Routes to School) Dallin School arrival/dismissal pilot. Also met with SRTS regional coordinator Judy Crocker to discuss arrival/dismissal challenges at Pierce School.

TAC has formed a working group to address issues related to the bike lane in front of the High School on Mass Ave and challenges with drop-off/pick-up activities encroaching on the bike lane.

## 7. Town Day for 2022. Planning combined booth with TAC. Mass Ave/Appleton? Working group?

TAC chair Laura Swan raised concern about how to staff the combined booth. Christopher Tonkin will recommend 2-4 persons be present at all times, and suggest that we focus on Mass Ave/Appleton, with diagrams and maps of proposals.

ABAC's Town Day working group (Christopher Tonkin, Scott Smith, Linda Epstein) will meet with Laura Swan and any other TAC representative in August to firm up plans.

Action item: Scott Smith to write to Laura Swan and also confirm who from TAC is involved.

## 8. Mass Ave/Appleton Design Review Committee

Covered in updates from Daniel below

## 9. Report from Doug on meeting with Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) meeting re: bikes on park trails

Doug Mayo-Wells: Daniel Amstutz also attended and may have additional notes. The commission has received requests from citizens to designate some trails as pedestrian-only, especially ones that are too narrow for a bike to safely pass a pedestrian, particularly around Spy Pond and the reservoir, and Monotomy Rocks park.

The PRC is aware of the initiative for a bike trail connection via the Res and support of that, the concern is about other trails.

Several points were raised:

- Enforcement of a ban may be difficult.
- "Please walk your bike" signs may have low compliance, being specific could help, "Please walk your bike between 'this street' and 'that street'."
- More bike parking could be an alternative, e.g. "Park your bike and walk from here."
- "Through bike traffic use 'route'" might be more successful, or "Caution children" signage.
- Piloting signage changes may not be enough, need an education campaign as well.
- Key takeaway, PRC is interested in an ongoing conversation with ABAC and suggests involving the Reservoir Committee to identify an approach to keep all trail users safe.

Christopher Tonkin: Sounds reasonable, a lot of the trails are narrow, unpaved and weren't intended as bike routes initially (except around Spy Pond). After signs are posted it may be beneficial to ask APD for support, COBWEB officers at peak usage times.

Daniel Amstutz: These concerns have been raised previously. Around the reservoir, the bike network priority is for connection from Lowell St to the Bikeway, so restricting bike traffic on other trails would likely have little impact. For Spy Pond, access to the playground is a bit tricky, if you're coming from East Arlington, the logical direction is to go onto the path from Linwood St. Cyclists will likely not go to the ramp at Pond Lane and make a very acute turn to double back.

Any designation of pedestrian-only needs to be very clear and unambiguous, with good signage.

Christopher Tonkin: How wide is the path?

Daniel Amstutz: 6ft with 1ft shoulders? Bike racks are located at Pond Lane, so once you get to the playground you've almost gone through the whole path.

Scott Smith: Three messages to convey:

1. Primarily pedestrian spaces
2. Go slow (5mph)
3. Walk your bike if it is crowded

Christopher Tonkin: Wonder if there is any way to widen the path or designate it as 1-way for cyclists.

Daniel Amstutz: The Spy Pond path was redone very recently, so not a good candidate for expansion soon

Muris Kobaslija: Fence by playground limits ability to widen, but playground redesign is underway: <https://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/59602/>

May be possible to improve bike access as part of that effort?

Daniel Amstutz: Recreation Director Joseph Connelly would be the person to contact but those designs are pretty far along, planning to reconstruct this fiscal year, not necessarily simple to provide more bike access.

Christopher Tonkin: Cycling on sidewalks is not permitted in Town, so designating paths as sidewalks would restrict bike access.

## 10. Tri-Town Meeting, save a date and agenda, postponed until late summer early fall.

Several participants were not available for the previous proposal of repurposing the July or August ABAC meeting for Tri-Town.

## 11. ABAC Funds

Christopher Tonkin: Talked to School Superintendent Dr Homan about ABAC funding Mass Bike programs at Gibbs School, she was very supportive. Will work with Galen Mook at Mass Bike on a proposal for this fall or spring 2023.

We had discussed using funds for an ABAC social/community outreach event, but there are concerns about how/where to safely host an event in the ongoing pandemic. Instead we could host a community breakfast on the trail during Bike Week, or set up outside Kickstand and pay for food and coffee.

## 12. Development of new rubric for road markings, bike lanes with and without protection. Progress?

Daniel Amstutz: Working group of Phil Goff (Everywhere Arlington Livable Streets), Petru Sofio, Daniel Amstutz and Scott Smith is meeting on July 25.

River St, Medford St and others are in a holding pattern, awaiting guidance from the Town Manager's office.

The Planning Department has funding this FY to hire an engineering or design firm; the goal is to use some of those funds to hire a designer to update the guidelines. Need to define consultant's public engagement as well as engagement with ABAC and TAC. (Need to limit engagement to keep within budget/avoid scope creep.)

Scott Smith: We need paint on these busy streets to be done this painting season. Could hedge bets by placing a center line with a narrow travel lane, yielding a shoulder line that is right on the edge of minimal parking lane width and would preserve the option to convert to a buffered bike lane. Would argue more strenuously for a bike lane on Medford St and informal approach on River St.

Daniel Amstutz: Focus of this effort is updating guidance for next construction season so next time there is more advance notice of streets/projects, and taking into account if streets are part of the bike network. DPW and the Town should have clear guidance, so a "least effort" path is not followed, especially where on-street parking may be affected.

Christopher Tonkin: Lack of advance notice is one of the key challenges. Perhaps a consultant could provide insight into how other communities address this (if work plans are communicated farther in advance)?

Scott Smith: For Medford St this painting season, an 11' or 12' travel lane would be a vast improvement.

## 13. General updates from Daniel:

See <https://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/61902/>

### a. Minuteman Bikeway Planning Project update

Plan complete, to be posted on the Town website shortly.

Need to determine what project priorities should be pursued for funding (such as CPA, taking applications in August/September).

Jack Johnson: Attended the presentation in June, well moderated, with lots of interesting ideas for improving connections. Comprehensively clearing the Bikeway (removing weeds and junk trees, mowing regularly) could increase the usable surface of the Bikeway without widening the paved area (clearing 2' on either side of the Bikeway where possible). Lexington has addressed some of this on their portion of the Bikeway.

Daniel Amstutz: There has been interest from Environmental Planner David Morgan in determining how to address non-native species on the Bikeway, particularly the knotweed. Wants to work with the Conservation Commission, volunteers, and DPW. Opportune moment to focus on this since there is interest and momentum.

Kittelson makes the point in their report that any potential pavement widening should be assessed early in planning processes, since that will determine much of what is possible.

Christopher Tonkin: Lexington and Bedford committees have expressed interest, would be good to invite them to any presentation.

#### **b. Mass Trails Grant - Mystic River to Bikeway Feasibility Study update**

Final public meeting held June 22. Study is complete, to be posted on the Town website shortly.

Arlington did not receive MassTrails funding in spring 2022 round for design of the Mill Street/Summer Street segment

Will likely apply for the next MassTrails round (due Feb 1 2023). Other funding sources have been discussed, but MassTrails remains the most obvious source for now.

#### **c. Mass Ave/Appleton Safety & Accessibility Corridor Project**

Held open house on June 23rd, with about 20 attendees. Solicited input with MURAL Board, which was not totally successful (have gotten some comments, but technology is challenging for some to use), sending links to slides and recording, with Google Form as alternative to the MURAL. The consultant (Stantec) will be meeting with representatives of childcare programs and the transportation coordinator for the Ottoson school district to learn more about their travel patterns and needs; they are working to comprehensively understand the needs of all users of the corridor and area. Next step is a public meeting / presentation of design concepts in September.

Muris Kobaslija: Agree that MURAL has a bit of a learning curve.

Scott Smith: Town Day could be a good opportunity to solicit input on missing connections.

Daniel Amstutz: Yes. There are also two boards posted in the library with sticky notes available for comment. Could reuse those for Town Day since they will be removed from the library in early August. Just need to check that it is in the right stage of the project for getting public feedback.

## 14. Tales from the Bikeway, matters arising from the Bikeway

Christopher Tonkin: Knotweed is a problem again, especially in the heights near the lumber yard, reducing visibility and available road surface. Should submit a work order to cut it back.

Len Greenberg: Visibility to the left is poor entering the bikeway at the former Gold's Gym. Would mounting a mirror be practical?

Christopher Tonkin: A mirror is available, but installation has been difficult due to property rights, etc.. Worth revisiting because there have been crashes at the site requiring medical attention. The Redevelopment Board has mandated the property owner to maintain the access area. Could place the mirror on a pole vs. drilling into bridge abutments.

## 15. Tracking “Scary Moments” as in Cambridge. Add a site to ABAC’s

See: <https://www.cambridgebikesafety.org/2018/01/21/scary-moments-project>

and

<http://thecreativeexchange.org/projects/near-miss-project.html>

Action item: Christopher Tonkin and Doug Mayo-Wells will discuss/refine the proposal.

## 16. Any other business

Christopher Tonkin: Any report from the Bike Rodeo?

Scott Smith: It was about an hour long, well attended. Maybe more entertainment than education focused, but covered hand signals, some repair basics. Suggested that kids should walk bikes in crossings rather than ride through (which seems appropriate to skill level).



Christopher Tonkin: On visit to Manchester observed more formal training with kids about 8 or 9 in high-vis suits, taking a class on a road with a lot of traffic, coming to a stop and making a turn across traffic at a T junction. Trying to learn more about this program.

Scott Smith: Overall the rodeo was fun, did not impart misinformation, but not adequate for kids to learn to ride safely.

Linda Epstein: Noticing a lot of construction vehicles parked near Appleton recently. Slowing both vehicle and bike traffic.

## 17. Return to live meetings

Daniel Amstutz advised that the current extension of online meetings for open meeting law is through Mar 31, 2023.

Jack Johnson: Online meetings have been beneficial in drawing new participants into the committee, could be valuable even beyond next March, if feasible. (Possibly alternate in-person with remote, to avoid challenges of hybrid meetings.)

Linda Epstein: Switching between remote and in-person meetings sounds attractive.

Christopher Tonkin: We do miss the in-person connection, could have a meeting, then gather in-person, outdoors, to talk generally (not about bicycle matters).

Scott Smith moves to adjourn

Adjourned